Case Study: Communication to inspire innovation

Communication is critical to industry knowledge sharing, and has the power to unlock practice change and drive innovation at the business level.

That's the view of NGIA CEO, Peter Vaughan, who works with agribusiness PR firm, Cox Inall, to deliver the *Nursery Industry Communications Program* (NY18001) funded by Hort Innovation.

The three-year program ensures activities and outputs generated from levy-funded research and development (R&D), as well as marketing, are communicated in a clear, concise and practical way.

Mr Vaughan said the program is the primary channel to connect growers with the latest industry research and best practice resources.

"It's important to see the nursery levy as an investment. It's a contribution that facilitates a program that helps improve business productivity and industry prosperity." Mr Vaughan said.

"As with any investment, it's vital to track its progress and see what it can deliver for you and your business, which is why our communications program is so important."

Pictured: Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA) Chief Executive Officer, Peter Vaughan.

Mr Vaughan said the program communicates the activities and tools generated from more than 15 R&D and marketing projects, a portfolio worth $2.6 million in 2017-18.

"There's a number of key projects underway, ranging from improving plant health, addressing labour needs, bolstering industry statistics and greening our cities," he said.

"The projects fit into the nursery Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), a blueprint which outlines key themes and deliverables to build a stronger, more resilient and profitable industry.

"Put simply, the R&D portfolio supports businesses in the greenlife supply side of the industry, so keep a look out for projects on pest management, minor use permits, and business benchmarking, to name a few.

"The demand side is driven by marketing, such as the 202020 Vision and Plant Life Balance campaign, which are inspiring Australians to bring more greenlife into their communities and homes."

Currently, there are a number of ways for businesses to learn about, and implement, the outcomes of nursery R&D and marketing investments.

"Whether you prefer R&D and marketing news delivered to your inbox, on social media or in the mail every month – there is a channel to suit every need," he said.

"On top of our regular 'Your Levy @ Work' e-newsletter, case studies and articles, we're also introducing new outputs in 2019 such as more fact sheets and a quarterly podcast.

"The podcast will bring the latest research insights to life, featuring interviews with some of Australia's leading plant researchers, consultants and agribusinesses.

"We understand that production nurseries are busy environments, so we're adjusting our approach to ensure what we deliver is fit for purpose and timely."

Mr Vaughan said the communications program continues to evolve and reflect the modern and changing nature of the Australian nursery industry.

"The main aims of the program are to raise awareness and encourage adoption of new nursery practices or innovations at the business level, such as boosting the bottom line and green credentials," he said.

"We speak with the researchers, consultants and growers, who are making a meaningful impact on our industry – and it's important we continue to showcase their outcomes in new, interesting ways.

"Our long-term goal is to position the nursery industry at the cutting edge of Australian horticulture – and I see consistent and high quality communication as integral to getting us there."

To watch Peter's video, click here.

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